

Open Space & Recreation Plan Map and Wildlife Species Inventory Guide

A well-written Open Space and Recreation Plan enables a community to protect its valuable resources, preserve important plant and animal habitats, provide adequate recreational facilities for its residents, and maintain its distinct character. Towns with an approved plan are also eligible to apply for Self-Help, Urban Self-Help, Land and Water Conservation Funds, and other grant programs administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' Division of Conservation Services. The division has published a number of documents designed to aid towns in the formation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan. These documents include the *Open Space Planner's Workbook*, which provides detailed information on what should be included in each section of the plan, as well as a reference guide and advice on assembling an Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee, and the shorter *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements* document, which summarizes much of the information found in the workbook. Both documents can be found online at <http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/global/publications.htm>.

Among the required elements of a community's Open Space and Recreation Plan is a set of maps that serve to illustrate the content of various plan sections. Both of the above-mentioned documents list the following required maps:

1. Zoning Map – to illustrate Section 3D
2. Soils and Geologic Features Map – to illustrate Section 4
3. Unique Features Map – to illustrate Sections 4B and 4F
4. Water Resources Map – to illustrate Section 3C
5. Open Space Inventory Map – to illustrate Section 5
6. Action Plan Map – to illustrate Section 9

In addition to the required maps, the maps listed below are recommended as optional:

- A. Regional Context – to illustrate Section 3A
- B. Historic Town Maps – to illustrate Section 3B
- C. Population Characteristics – to illustrate Section 3C
- D. Current Land Use – to illustrate Section 3D
- E. Existing infrastructure – to illustrate Section 3D
- F. Maximum Zoning Build-Out – to illustrate Section 3D
- G. Plant and Wildlife Habitat – to illustrate Sections 4D and 4E
- H. Environmental Challenges – to illustrate Section 4G

The thematic viewers available on the ConservationMapper web site can be used to aid in the map development process. The table below lists several of the required/recommended maps, along with the corresponding thematic viewer and viewer layers used to create them. Please note that several of the maps listed above—the Soils and Geologic Features Map, Action Plan Map, Regional Context Map, Historic Town Maps, Population Characteristics Map, and Maximum Zoning Build-Out Map—cannot be created at all with ConservationMapper. Also, of the maps that can be created with ConservationMapper, several are missing some necessary data layers due to either unavailability of the digital data, or restrictions on data distribution. Still, even with these limitations, the ConservationMapper viewers can serve as a good starting point for the creation of Open Space and Recreation Plan maps.

Another element that should be included in a town's Open Space and Recreation Plan is a fish and wildlife species inventory (Section 4E). The Wildlife viewer on ConservationMapper can be used to create such an inventory. Directions on how to use the Hyperlink tool in the Wildlife viewer to view, copy, paste, and save species records are available in the ConservationMapper user's guide.

Open Space & Recreation Plan Requirement/Recommendation	Thematic Viewer Used	Visible Layers	Comments
Zoning Map (Required Map 1)	Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning district abbreviation labels • Zoning – Primary Use OR Zoning – General Use 	Labels may not appear in all polygons at town-level view
Unique Features Map (Required Map 3)	Environmental/ Scenic/Historic Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic sites • ACECs • ORWs • Scenic landscapes • Estimated Habitats • Priority Habitats • BioMap Core Habitat • BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape • Wetlands 	
Water Resources Map (Required Map 4)	Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole-source aquifers • ORWs • Major drainage basins • Drainage sub-basins • FEMA Q3 flood zones • Streams & rivers • Ponds & lakes • Wetlands • Aquifers 	Some required datasets (e.g. extent of tidal penetration into estuaries) are not available from MassGIS but may exist elsewhere; others (e.g. wellhead protection areas, surface water supply protection areas, public water supplies) are held by MassGIS but do not appear on ConservationMapper due to distribution restrictions
Open Space Inventory Map (Required Map 5)	Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently protected lands • Open space (MassGIS) 	
Current Land Use Map (Optional Map D)	Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – 1999 	

Open Space & Recreation Plan Requirement/Recommendation	Thematic Viewer Used	Visible Layers	Comments
Existing Infrastructure Map (Optional Map E)	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle trails • Long-distance trails • Tracks & trails • Commuter train stations • Railroads • Roads 	Some suggested datasets (e.g. municipal sewer system, individual septic systems) are not available from MassGIS but may exist elsewhere; others (e.g. public/private water supplies, pipelines/transmission lines) are held by MassGIS but do not appear on ConservationMapper due to distribution restrictions
Plant and Wildlife Habitat Map (Optional Map G)	Environmental/Scenic/Historic Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified vernal pools • Potential vernal pools • Estimated Habitats • Priority Habitats • BioMap Core Habitat • BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape 	Priority Natural Vegetation Communities dataset not yet available on ConservationMapper
Environmental Challenges Map (Optional Map H)	Environmental Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil or hazardous material sites • Groundwater discharge permits • FEMA Q3 flood zones • Solid waste facilities 	Some suggested datasets (e.g. erosion, sedimentation, impaired water bodies) are not available from MassGIS but may exist elsewhere; others (e.g. underground storage tanks, Bureau of Waste Prevention major facilities) are held by MassGIS but do not appear on ConservationMapper due to distribution restrictions
Fish and Wildlife Species Inventory	Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeding Bird Atlas data • Bird Observer sightings • Harvard MCZ mammal data • MA DFW furbearer data • UMass mammal data • NMNH mammal data • Harvard MCZ fish data 	Please see the user's guide on using the Hyperlink feature for instructions on how to copy, paste, and save species records